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The History of Capcom's
Street Fighter



The Sam Coupe
Story



Retro Remakes
Re-Visited





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Editorial



Another 2005 retro event, another new magazine! Welcome to Retro Fusion you lucky readers.

It's been an interesting few months to say the least. It all started back in August, just before the CGE UK event to be exact, when rumours started to circulate on the internet forums regarding the financial stability of Live Publishing. It was soon announced that Retro Gamer magazine would revert to being published bi-monthly and one of the other magazines in Live's portfolio would cease to be produced.

Speculation on the Live Publishing forum was rife. Within a couple of weeks of the initial announcement, Live went into receivership and their forum was unceremoniously shut down.

And so was born Retro Survival, a vibrant and pure retro community that quickly rose up from the ashes of the defunct Live forum. Retro Survival's sole existence is to publish the unprinted works of the many unpaid Retro Gamer freelancers in an attempt to recoup some of the financial

losses experienced by the demise of Live. By the time you read this the Retro Survival CD will be up for sale for the modest price of £5 @ www.retrosurvival.co.uk

And then out of the blue it is announced that Retro Gamer is going to make a come back. Bought by fledgling publishing company Imagine, Retro Gamer promises to be back on the shop shelves in early December and will be edited by non-other than Darran Jones, now ex-retro editor of Games TM.

And what of Retro Fusion? Well hopefully what you are reading is the start of something special that reports on all aspects of retro "fused" into one magazine. Be sure to let us know what you think of the magazine at www.retrofusion.co.uk as the future of Retro Fusion lies very much in your hands. If your feedback is positive then Alligata Media will potentially launch Retro Fusion commercially.

As the old saying goes, Competition is healthy. Enjoy the magazine!

Chris Wilkins
Retro Fusion Editor



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Freelancers Bite Back!

Unpublished RetroGamer articles resurface

After Live Publishing went into administration, the freelance writers were left with unpublished articles – many of which would have been in issue 19 of Retro Gamer. The freelancers decided to work together to produce a tribute to Retro Gamer, in the form of a CD-based magazine with the “lost” articles.

Designed for use on PC and Macintosh, many of the familiar columns are back again – Games That Weren’t, Back to the 80’s, Auction Watch – along with some cracking special features. Learn more about Al Lowe and the Leisure Suit Larry series, read about the amazing Ganbare Goemon games, and see how Commodore failed with the Amiga 1200 and CD-32 in Next Level Gaming. There are also reports from CGE UK and Back in Time Lite, more hilarious spoof ads, exclusive video & audio footage, and a



letters page. Plus there are extra pages from the amazing Def Tribute to ZZAP! 64.

Editor Andrew Fisher said, “It’s been a roller-coaster ride since RG closed. And just as we went to press, the news broke about the magazine’s comeback with new publisher Imagine. So our CD marks the end of that chapter, and the start of something new...”

The price of this slice of retro gaming history is just £5, with post & packaging based on where in the world you are. Retro Survival is also the name of the forum where many of the familiar faces from the Live forums took refuge.

You can visit the website to order your copy or you can buy your copy at the Retro Ball. Whatever you do, check out the forum at www.retrosurvival.co.uk



Retro Charity Gaming

Olschool Gaming with Balls

It was pretty much like any other day on the Digital Arcade forum - members posting about the progress on their MAME cabinets, banter on the upcoming CGE show and the odd wind up post for everyone's reading pleasure.

One of the forum members goes by the name of DJMassive (DJ). Now DJ, aka Pete Beverley, has been a member on the DA forum from its very beginning and has notched up a fair few posts since the launch of the site last November. Now and again DJ will post some info on charities that he supports and on a number of occasions he has tried to persuade the other members to do this or do that in the aid of charity. To be honest, the take up to these requests was never particularly good!

So the topic of DJ's new thread of the day was “Testicular Cancer” and how we could raise money for the charity Everyman.

It seemed like a good idea, but no more so that the other causes DJ had brought to our attention in the past 8 months.

But this time it seemed different. The next few posts suggested a sponsored gaming battle between the Digital Arcade forum and the Retro Passion forum with proceeds going to charity. I thought nah,

lets make this bigger, better and a much more ambitious event where people from all over the UK could attend and play gaming systems from both yesteryear and modern day with a large proportion of the proceeds going to the Everyman charity. Now this sounded like a plan...

So it fell upon myself, DJ and Koopa from the forum to test the water and see what kind of support we would get from the retro community for such an event. And boy was the response good...

The event as you now know is called “The Retro Ball” (see the ball link – Chris Abbott came up with this name) and takes place in Kenilworth, Warwickshire over the weekend of the 3rd and 4th December 2005.

This year's sponsors are Console Passion and Blitz Games accompanied by endorsement from CGEUK.

The website for the event is www.play4charity.co.uk. Please register on the forum and let us know what you thought of the event if you attended. The long-term plan is to have a number of events of this kind under the Play4Charity banner. Please keep checking the site for up and coming news on future events and watch out for a full review of the event in the near future.

Retro Fusion First Issue

Thanks to all Involved!

Prior to my editorial position within Retro Fusion, I was heavily involved with the Retro Revival fanzine (www.retorevival.co.uk). After the successful launch of Issue 4 of the fanzine at CGEUK this year, Simon (the editor) and myself were approached by David Bradford from Alligata Media and we talked about making Retro Revival a commercial publication.

Over the weeks after the initial discussions it was decided that the Retro Revival fanzine would not become a fully fledged commercial magazine and that actually it was the right time to let Retro Revival go to fanzine heaven.

With the prospect of Retro Revival going commercial, a number of friends of the magazine came on board as sponsors and were prepared to help financially in getting the magazine onto the shelves of your local newsagents. With Retro Revival being no more and the sponsors still keen to fund a potential new commercial retro magazine, Retro Fusion was born.

CONSOLE PASSION

The primary sponsors of the Retro Fusion magazine are “Console Passion” (www.consolpassion.co.uk) owned by Andy Brown and “Retro Passion” (www.retropassion.co.uk) headed by Barry Tyler and Tom Butler. This magazine could not have been produced if it was not for the commitment and support of these guys and I thank them deeply for their trust in me and this project.

I would also like to thank the other four companies/groups pledging money to Retro Fusion for advertisement space. They are Blitz Games (www.BlitzGames.com), Just Pachinkos Lts (www.pachinkos.co.uk), Ultimarc (www.ultimarc.com) and Jamma+ (www.jammaplus.com).

RetroPassionCo.Uk

So what does the future hold for this fine magazine? Well your feedback is important to the future of the commercial standing of this magazine. If feedback is positive, then there is every chance that Retro Fusion will be on the shelves in your local WH Smiths in the very near future. If you like what you are holding it your hands, be sure to head over to www.retrofusion.co.uk and lets us know your feelings and thoughts – the future of the magazine is in your hands.

“To produce a magazine of this quality with the time that was available is testimony to those involved”

The Editor

In association with Console Passion and Blitz Games, it's the...

RETRO BALL

ROUGH GUIDE

So, you've arrived at The Retro Ball and had a copy of this magazine thrust into your hands. Do you want to know what's happening around here? Here's the Rough Guide...

The Main Hall

The central area is the Arcade Zone, and will be populated by at least twelve arcade cabinets from Jammaplus.com. There could very well be more!!

Retropassion is looking after the **Driving Zone**, within which you will be able to play such classics as Chase H.Q. on the ZX Spectrum, through to a dual set-up Outrun 2 on 28" TVs with 5.1 surround sound! A Daytona USA upright arcade cabinet will also be making an appearance in this zone as well as Rollcage on the Playstation, 4-player Mario Kart on the N64 and many, many more.

Console Passion is looking after the **Fighting Zone**. Here you will be able to play games such as Way of the Exploding Fist on the Commodore 64 through to Soul Calibur on the Dreamcast. A MAME cabinet from www.mamecabs.co.uk will be showcasing the classic Neo-Geo fighting games such as King of Fighters.

In the Shoot Em Up Zone classics such as Ad Astra on the Spectrum can be played alongside MAME cabinets playing games such as R-Type and Nemesis and a cocktail Midway cabinet playing Scramble and various other computer and console systems.

Nick from **Pinballers Anonymous** is bringing along 6 pinball tables for the **Pinball Zone**. Also we have a large selection of Japanese Pachinko pinball machines and a demonstration of Visual Pinball on the PC.

There will also be a Retro Gamer stand. Darren Jones will be bringing a selection of gaming platforms for visitors to play on, whilst talking to visitors about the future of the Retro Gamer magazine.

The Projector Area

This is ideally located next to the main bar. Within this area, we will have 2 projector screens running a plethora of gaming systems.

Rob from **Psychorobs Games Zone**, will be manning one of the projectors, and it will be here that competitions with the celebs will take place. If you ever thought it would be cool to play Jon Hare at Sensible Soccer, you will now have the opportunity to fulfil those dreams.

The second projector screen will be used to play retro imagery, the BIT Live concert DVD and games such as Pro Evo Soccer 4.

The Balcony

The balcony area above the Projector Area entertains the **Handheld** and **Deathmatch Zones**. Here you will be able to pick up a handheld console; like the Sega Gamegear, from the table and sit down on the comfortable sofas and play away to your heart's content. We also have 2-4 PCs connected together playing Deathmatch Quake, Doom, Unreal Tournament, etc.

The balcony also plays host to Cronosoft, so if you want some new games for old machinery, get yourselves upstairs.

Retro Traders

Within the retro traders section you will find three purveyors of retro gaming goodness in the form of Console Passion and RetroVideoGames. If you are looking to part with some cash for old gear, stop by and browse.

These exhibitors will also have a few machines for you to play in-between bouts of you spending your hard earned cash!

Competitions

Challenge the Gaming Elite!

Competitions will be run throughout the weekend within each of the Zones. A powerpoint presentation displayed on a 28" monitor in the projector area will show the competition schedule. The current line up of competitions is expected to be as follows (subject to change - keep checking those screens).

Saturday

12noon Bomberman
2.00pm Outrun
4.00pm Q&A session
6.00pm Street Fighter 2 Turbo
7.30pm Retro Remakes Winner
8.30pm Donkey Konga
9.30pm Pop Party
11.30pm Samba Di Amiga

Sunday

11.00am Retro Quiz
12.30pm Galaxian
2.00pm Sensible Soccer
4.00pm Quake 3

Gary Whelan will be available to coach visitors on the Saturday in playing Galaxian and Archer Maclean will challenge people to games of Drop Zone, JWW Snooker and IK+



The Street Fighter franchise is considered by many (not all) to be the pinnacle of 2D fighting games. This is a view I happen to agree with having played almost all versions and crossovers (X-men vs. Capcom vs. Marvel).

In 1987 Capcom released a 2D fighting game called Street Fighter, a simple idea of a lone fighter travelling the world picking fights with various other Street Fighters. It promised a new concept in game play and a revolutionary control system that would take the world by storm.

Well it didn't, although the ideas were sound and the game play was indeed more advanced than many of the predecessors of its genre. The so-called 'revolutionary' control system comprised of 2 pressure sensitive pads per player as opposed to standard buttons and were supposed to gauge the strength of any attack on how hard the button was 'hit'. Obviously this put an enormous strain on the actual hardware resulting in a high breakdown rate, making many owners weary of putting it in their arcades (as well as many supposed player injuries caused by crazy ass players actually trying to kick the pads). So the button bashing, lawsuit-inducing system was consigned to the 'could have been' lot of arcade history, and replaced with the now all too familiar 6-button kick/punch system we all know and love where each button varied the strength of kick or punch and the 'short, strong, fierce' system was born.



SHORYUKEN!

In the same year that the original Street Fighter was released a man called Yoshiki Okamoto was making huge arcade hits such as 1943 The Battle of Midway (also a Capcom title) the sequel to the massively popular 1942 (also a Capcom/Okamoto title). It was in 1989 that Okamoto had his biggest hit to date with Capcom's Final Fight, a 2D scrolling fighter that had hints of the greatness that would be added to the Street Fighter franchise. Capcom put Okamoto in charge of creating their newest 2D fighter, Street Fighter II 'The World Warrior' and after that Capcom never looked back.

The World Warrior stuns the World

Four years after the original, SFII The World Warrior hits the arcades in 1991 and literally set the bar for all 2D fighters for the rest of the 90s. Ok-



moto had truly astonished with a brilliant multi hit combo based game system with a massive 8 playable characters. Each character had a unique fighting style (well almost, lets not count Ken and Ryu) and combo system. For me (and many others) it was the first instance of combo play, where in certain situations, and with certain moves, after hitting an opponent once, the player was unable to block the following 2 or 3 moves. This combined with devastating 'special attacks' made the games replay value immense due to wanting to discover new attacks and new combos. The special moves were also groundbreaking, needing the combination of joystick movements and button presses to release a multitude of uniquely devised attacks. Also there was the masterstroke of having 4 hidden boss characters—for me this is the best addition in any game. When I first got to them it was such a great feeling. I was lucky because I really hadn't read about them, so when their faces appeared I was totally stunned (especially having thought I'd completed the game; gutted when I then got systematically demolished by that fool Balrog).

Intricate histories added yet more depth to the whole game, certain character storylines even crossed over such as Sagat wanting revenge on Ryu for the scar he now sports on his chest (Ryu gave this to Sagat at the end of Street Fighter by dragon punching his ass into next week). These histories would be continued and even built on throughout the SFII series literally building an entire story line that would be realised in numerous books, comics, and several great anime films (the movie Street Fighter starring Jean Claude Van Pratt has no relevance to this article or anything ever. It was a dark day for Street Fighter fans worldwide – not even Kylie could drag this one out of the gutter).

The 2 player option of this game increased the lasting appeal of the SFII game exponentially. Not only were kids playing to discover secret combos or see new endings they were now able to plough in coins and spend hours caning the shit out of each other. Ironically by the end of SFII Championship Edition, I assumed the arcades would be hoping people would be playing 1 on 1 as by this time most serious SFII games could clock the game on one credit and on any setting. The real fun was in trying to find a decent fighter

to take on. Local Laser quests would sit empty while the SFII machine in the foyer would be crowded will kids desperate to get in on the action.

Street Fighter II Championship Edition

With the world absolutely obsessed and enthralled with The World Warrior, Capcom needed to keep the series hot but didn't want to risk moving away from what was now THE ultimate template for 2D fighters (and would be for the rest of gaming history!) and this was where Championship Edition entered the fray. SFII CE offered very little in the way of new moves but more in the way of faster game speed and much better/smoothier combo systems and one other very important addition, you could now choose the 4 end boss characters as playable! Yes you could now pick Balrog, Vega, Sagat, and M Bison.

The two player versus mode gained massively from the extra speed and better combo system. This was a master stroke from Capcom as now players who could clock the game with one credit (average 15 – 20min per 30p credit) were spending much more money scrapping it out with their mates.

One neat little 'secret' was that if you pressed the player 1 credit button when selecting your character you could select your players 'alternative colour' suit. This was added because unlike The World Warrior you could fight against the same character you had chosen – both in single and 2-player mode.

Many people saw SFII CE as a money spinning cash in, but I felt it was the pinnacle of the SFII franchise, the combo systems and game speed has not been bettered in any other SF game, or any other 2D fighter (again that's my view, if you like Street Fighter vs. King of donkeys vs. pacman



The films, the comics, the action figure - The franchise is like a George Lucas wet dream.

Laser Quests would sit empty while the SFII machine in the foyer would be crowded...

alpha hyper turbo fighting, that's up to you).

Hacks

It was the SFII CE that seemed to result in numerous homebrew type 'hack' games.. These ranged from simple additions such as characters having new fireball moves or being able to do special moves mid jump to ridiculous hacks where the game speed was cranked up stupidly fast and moves were easily pulled off. This included charge (hold for 2 seconds) moves having the charge removed so you could just flick back/forward and release a barrage of sonic booms or psycho crushers. These hacks were crude, almost impossible to complete and had a tendency to 'crash' usually when you had 7 credits in! This would be extremely annoying and usually end with a bit of 'arcade owner' baiting! Note for anyone buying jamma PCBs on eBay – many of the hacks look identical to the original SFII CE board, be careful what you are buying.



Eventually there would be more crossover tie-ins than you could shake a big pointy stick at.



Street Fighter Trivia

There are many glitches, secrets, and down-right lies throughout the history of Street Fighter.

My personal favourite, one I actually fell for, was the classic 'if you get to M Bison and don't let him hit you, Sheng Long (yes Ryu and Ken's fabled mentor) would appear, kill Bison then fight you! (Later Capcom would indeed feature this sort of secret in the game). It was an APRIL issue of the magazine EGM that included a guide on how to play the characters in the game and an actual screen shot of Sheng

Long looking like Ryu, in a darker grey suit and grey hair in mid dragon punch! Amazed and oblivious to the month that the magazine was released in I promptly spent the next few weeks trying to get to Bison, and not let him hit me—an absolute impossibility.

And yes I was suitably gutted when it turned out to be an April sucka fool!

Kudos to EGM for doctoring the pictures, and fooling more than just a few readers.

The glitches I spoke of were actual bugs in the game, exploitable by extremely precise character positioning and complex joystick skulduggery. The Guile handcuffs bug is indeed a nightmare of a glitch to pull off. As Guile, charge (down for 2 secs)

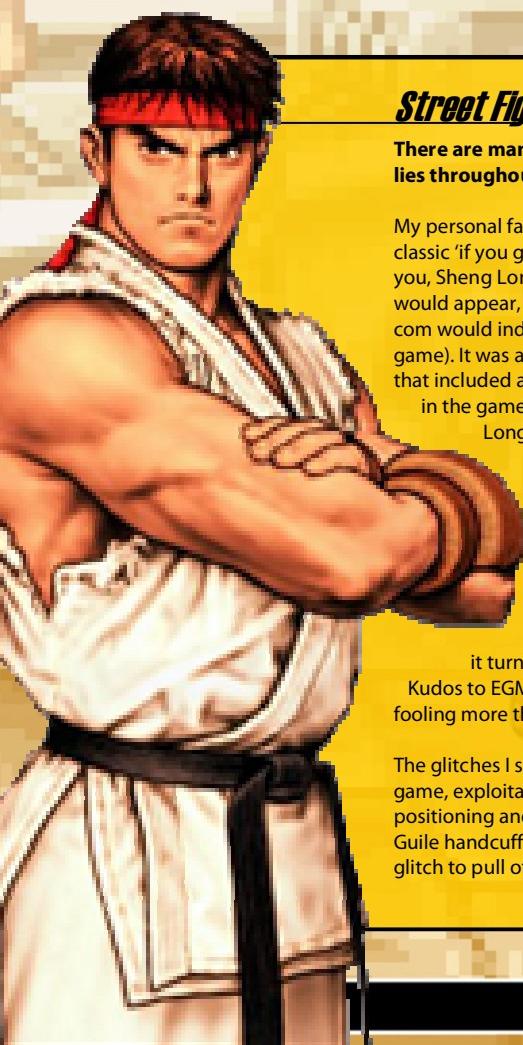
then when your opponent is next to you press up, strong punch, and forward kick. This (when it works) will lock you and your opponent together, and moves will no longer have an effect. You can then sit back and watch the timer count down and finally the machine crash. It was a great feeling to finally pull it off, then less of a great feeling remembering you have 6 credits left and the arcade owners face when you try and get a refund. There are many others including Guile's magic throw and Guile's black out.

Several years after the EGM article their April Foolishness became reality – well sort of, when in Super Street Fighter II it was revealed that indeed if you could get to Bison without losing a round a secret character called Akuma (the alleged demon fighter responsible for the death of Ryu and Ken's mentor) appeared, caned the arse of Bison and then usually proceeded to cane your arse off.

In the original Japanese versions of the SF games M Bison was in fact Vega, Vega was Balrog and Balrog was Bison, confusing eh? You bet it is.

Guile has a supposed re-dizzy combo, as in once dizzied you could continually re-dizzy your opponent until defeated, but I haven't witnessed this

The Shoryuken move shared by Ken and Ryu actually means 'rising dragon punch' meaning that Ryu means dragon and Ken means punch (I'm guessing sho means rising but I might have made that up).



BACK IN TIME



Retrovision

LITE

Chris Abbott said he wouldn't do it again. But he did! And it happened over a weekend in September albeit in 'Lite' format. What am I talking about? A Back In Time concert, that's what!

The last Back In Time concert took place in September 2004 at St Luke's in London and was a huge success in the eyes of all those who attended and played.

Chris announced that this would be the last Back In Time concert as he wanted to spend

frequently during the weekend.

As the months passed rumours of a new BIT gig started to circulate amongst select groups within the remix scene. There was talk of a weekend event combining the best of Retrovision and BIT and would be known as 'Back In Time Lite'. As further details emerged it became apparent that Retrovision would supply a number of retro consoles, computers and games for visitors to play during the daytime with a BIT concert taking place on the Saturday evening.

Posts were then made on the public Internet forums informing its members that BIT Lite would take place in Manchester on September 10th and 11th 2005 promising a weekend of gaming, socialising and music extravaganza!! A DVD of the footage filmed at St Luke's would also be available for purchase! There was also a rumour of a 'special guest' performing...

MJ Hibbett & the Validators were announced as a supporting act to SID80's. This band was responsible for the infamous, cult track "Hey, Hey 16k" that has enjoyed enormous success in the retro scene on the internet especially when Rob Manuel added a video to the track.

Travelling North

I travelled to the event on the Saturday morning and, on arriving at the venue (The Avenue, Greaves End, Failsworth), was greeted by the highly recognisable figure of Markie from Retrovision (the green head gave his identify away!) on the door. I handed over my ticket and walked into the Retrovision area that occupied the main lounge area of the venue.

The lounge was rectangular in shape with the retro kit from Console Passion (www.consolepassion.co.uk) and Retro Passion (www.retropassion.co.uk), occupying 3 sides with the bar on the 4th. Pride of place on the Retro Passion stand was their dual XBOX Outrun 2 set-up with cut down 20" TV's (the set-up appeared at Retrovision 5 with 28" widescreen TV's) and amplified sound. Other games included Soul Calibur on the Dreamcast connected to a 17" monitor with VGA adaptor (unfortunately no sound!) and R-Type Delta on the Playstation.

Console Passion had a number of games for



▲ Mark 'madfiddler' Knight

more time with his young children, make more music and not have the burden of organising such an event on his 'plate' again.

The BIT musicians though carried on making music and performing at smaller gigs such as Retrovision and CGEUK.

The marriage of SID80's and Retrovision in February 2005 sparked a new interest and demand for another fully fledged BIT gig. Mark Knight (aka madfiddler) and Ben Daglish played an acoustic set at the event with Chris on percussion. The set went down extremely well with those who attended and requests for another full blown BIT rock concert were heard



▲ madfiddler playing to SID80's

Visitors to play including the Virtual On dual joystick set-up that made its first showing at the CGEUK event in the Summer.

Various DVD's, T-shirts and posters were for sale also via the Binary Zone stand.

Rehearsals

Select friends were allowed into the concert room to watch SID80's and Press Play On Tape (PPOT) rehearse their tracks. The stage was a pretty impressive affair with 2 synthesisers, a drum kit and madfiddler's violins surrounded by



▲ Press Play on Tape (PPOT)



MJ Hibbett and the Validators ▲

a myriad of lighting and PA gadgetry.

One of the on-lookers was Rob Hubbard – aha the special guest!

Watching these guys rehearse was a pretty humbling experience. Here we had a number of musicians who had travelled from various parts of Europe to a small venue in the back streets of Manchester to put on a musical event for a niche group of followers.

For SID80's, rehearsals to that point had been via text through E-mail and Messenger. They actually sounded pretty polished and the fact that the whole group had not played live for nearly a year was not no-where evident!

Watching Rob Hubbard and madfiddler practice their duet pieces together was yet another special moment for me.

Live Concert

At around 7pm, the Retrovision room was locked and all visitors were ushered into the concert hall.

Unfortunately at this time MJ Hibbett & the Validators were still doing a sound check and for one brief moment I thought that this was



Mr Rob Hubbard ▲

the real thing – they kept starting and stopping and I genuinely thought they were having real problems on stage!

The concert then started proper. First up MJ Hibbett & the Validators. Amongst the tracks they performed was the infamous "Hey, Hey 16k". In fact they sang it twice. The other tracks they performed were un-memorable and I felt they pretty much outstayed their welcome on stage.

Press Play On Tape then took to the stage and performed an acoustic set which was absolutely amazing to watch and listen to.

Rob Hubbard and madfiddler then played a number of tracks ranging from classical to extremely moody and depressing (Rob told us he felt he had to write the down beat track after working on too many jolly tunes for Disney!). I would have much preferred to hear Rob's more mainstream hits such as Sanxion or Monty on Run. The performance was extremely professional and polished.

And then came the highlight for me, SID80's. I had seen this band play acoustic sessions at both Retrovision 5 and CGEUK but was yet to experience the full rock set-up promised at BIT Lite. And boy was I not disappointed!

Ben Daglish on flute & guitar, Mark Knight on violin, Jeremy Longley on bass, Jon Hare on acoustic guitar, Marcel Donné and Reyn Ouwehand on keys, Andreas Wallstrom on percussion – Ladies and Gentlemen, "Stuck in D 80's". Together the band played 7 tracks including Spellbound and Rasputin. The latter track saw madfiddler walk off the stage into the crowd of onlookers, climb on to tables and at one point actually leave the room!! Unfortunately Mark's fiddle stopped working at one point due to these shenanigans but he managed to get it working again before the tune finale!

The band played with compassion and enthusiasm throughout their set.

I spoke with Mark Knight a couple of days after the event and he confessed that the band had probably played their best gig ever at BIT Lite.

Conclusion

The fantastic atmosphere that oozes out of a live BIT concert is something I find very hard to transcribe into words. I have on many occasions tried to explain to friends and family what BIT and SID80's is all about but the way it comes across is extremely 'geeky' sounding and I feel I put more people off rather than convert them to the cause.

The BIT Lite concert was no exception. All those who attended experienced an amazingly atmospheric and enjoyable evening of music, beer, and banter with old and new friends alike.

The venue, though adequate, was not ideal.



Console Passion's Commodore 64 ▲

Situated in the back streets of Manchester, a large number of journeys had to be made by attendees to and from their hotel and the train station many miles away by expensive taxi. I am sure if the venue was more central and accessible, more people would have attended the event.

The Retrovision aspect of the event was by definition 'mini'. Even though a good spread of retro systems were on hand to be played the atmosphere of the RV area was not as good as what I experienced at RV 5 earlier in the year.

During a speech made by Chris at the start of the concert he said that this was definitely going to be the last Back In Time event that he will organise. The amount of effort involved in putting on such a show and persuading a diminishing niche audience to part with their cash has had its toll on Chris' motivation to do another one.

Lets hope then that Chris and the gang reconsider doing another event like this. If they do, and you like a bit of retro game playing and enjoy live music then get yourself along to it—you will not be disappointed.

In the mean time you can always buy the BIT Live DVD from www.c64audio.com. I have!!



Organiser Group Photo ▲

BACK IN TIME

DVD REVIEW

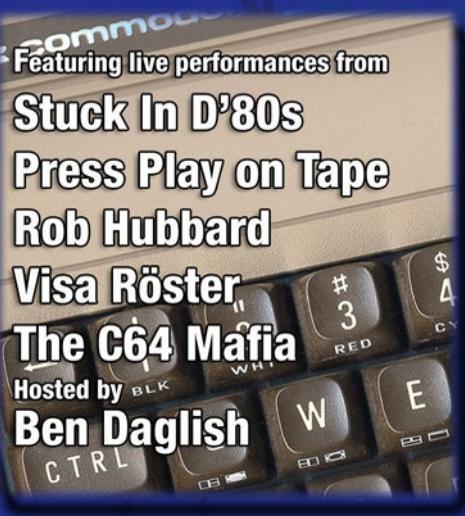


During the preparations for the Back in Time event at St Lukes a decision was made to record the concert for a future DVD and CD release. The DVD/CD set would be an ideal keepsake for the BIT fans and its sale would also generate some well-needed cash flow for the organisers of the event.

A year and half later, and after bucket loads of sweat and hard graft, the BIT Live deluxe DVD and CD set was born and shown to the world at the BIT Lite event in September 2005. For the purchase price of £20 you received a 3-disc set, 2 DVD's and 1 audio CD. The discs came in a classy DVD case with a glossy insert depicting images of the band playing at the event (pictures of the DVD case can be seen opposite on the Retro Fusion Competition page) and a list of disc contents on the reverse. Inside is found a high quality printed insert.

Disc 1 Contents

The St Lukes concert can be found on the first DVD.



Here we first have the impressive Press Play On Tape (PPOT) playing a total of 14 tracks including 'Monty on the Run' during which Stuck in D'80's (SID80's) join them on stage. Mark 'madfiddler' Knight must be only one of a handful of violinists that can do justice to the finale of this fantastic Rob Hubbard tune. Other tracks played by PPOT include Warhawk, Arkanoid and One Man & His Droid.

C64 Mafia then take to the stage and provide some of their own unique versions of tunes such as Forbidden Forest and Breakdance.

The superb Visa Röster are next. Think of 'The Flying Pickets' singing along to C64 tunes and you will have an idea how this band sounds. The cover versions of the likes of Comic Bakery and Armageddon Man are outstanding. The clever DVD producers have super-imposed Karate fighters on the stage when Visa Röster perform International Karate which adds greatly to the visualisation of the track.

Stuck in D'80s perform 6 tracks brilliantly including the awesome Spellbound and Rasputin. During Rasputin madfiddler once again jumps off the stage and mingles with the jubilant on-looking crowd.

Disc 2 Contents

For disc 2 we go back to the BIT concert held in Brighton in 2003. Rob Hubbard performs 11 of his infamous C64 tracks synonymous with his name. We are talking the likes of Sanxion, Commando, Spellbound and Thing on a Spring.

As an added extra, 2 SID80 tracks are included from the Brighton Event plus a backstage movie of the going's on leading up to the convert including an interview with Martin Galway.

Disc 3 Contents

Disc 3 contains 15 audio tracks for you to hum along to whilst driving to work. The tracks cover a selection of tracks from all the performing artists at St Lukes and Brighton.

Go Buy it!

I cannot recommend the Back In Time Live DVD enough. The production quality of the DVDs, CD and cover art is exemplary. Visit www.c64audio.com now and place your order!



▲ Ben Daglish



▲ Visa Röster



WIN!

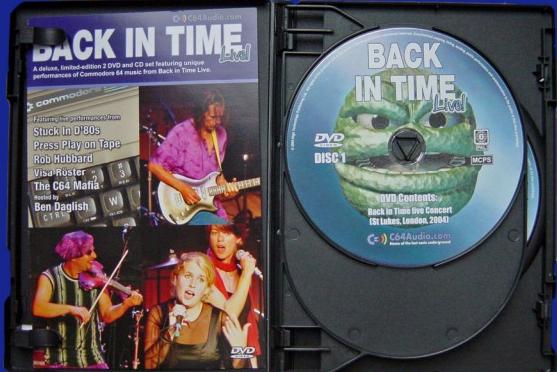


Win the Back In Time Lite deluxe DVD and CD set!

For this issue of Retro Fusion we have teamed up with C64Audio.com to offer you the chance of winning this fantastic DVD and CD set. To win this fine prize simply answer the simple question below and get your entry to us by 31st January 2006. Good Luck!

Competition rules: 1. The competition is open to all residents of the UK except affiliates of Retro Fusion and their immediate families. 2 Only one applicant per household will be accepted. 3. There is no cash alternative prize. 4. No Purchase necessary. 5. The closing date is 31st January 2006, entries after this date will be ignored. The winner of the DVD set will be notified as soon as possible after this date. 6. The decision of the editor will be final. 7. By entering the competition, competitors agree to be bound by the rules of the competition. No responsibility will be accepted for lost, late or damaged entries in the post or in-sufficiently pre-stamped entries.

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Postcode..... Telephone.....

E-mail.....

Answer this fairly easy question...

What is madfiddler's real name?

A Mark Knight B Jordan Knight C Mark King

Send your entry to The Retro Fusion Editor,
51 Dencer Drive, Kenilworth, CV8 2QR.
Closing date January 31st 2006

RETRO FUSION

C64-DTV

Review

The debate of which computer was best was common place amongst friends in the school playground during my youth. Back then it was the old battle of the Commodore 64 vs Spectrum vs Amstrad CPC. My loyalties fell into the Spectrum camp and I loved my little machine dearly.

Saying that though I was always curious about the other formats out there as there was a rumour going round that they were better than my Speccy, Sacrilege!!

I stayed in the Sinclair camp for many years, always keeping an eye on the competition and defending my machine daily against the onslaught of "Mine is better than yours..." banter which had become a way of life in the early 1980's.

Many years passed and even though I had never owned a Commodore 64 my life still seemed complete, until that is I heard a little while ago that a C64 TV plug and play device was about to hit the market and my nostalgic memories of playground battles came rolling back...

Plug and Play

The device in question is called the C64 DTV (Direct To Video) and had been available for some time in its NTSC incarnation when the PAL version hit the UK stores.

The first thing that impresses with the C64 DTV is the secure pyramid plastic packaging it comes in used to protect and showcase the device inside.

The manufacturers have gone for a leaf switch version of the Competition Pro 5000 as the interface to the 30 games held on the Commodore 64 circuitry held within. The build quality and feel of the joystick is extremely good when compared to the half hearted attempts of some of the competition such as the Namco arcade device which probably would win an award for the worst joystick ever, if such an award existed.

On the back of the joystick is the on/off button with a nice bright red LED signalling to the player when the device is on. Above this switch are a series of red buttons. The first, smaller, button when pressed resets the C64 DTV. The further 4 buttons, labelled A-D, serve specific extra functions within some of the games whilst playing in addition to the movements of the joystick and two buttons.

The fairly lengthy lead that comes out of the front of the device ends in a composite video (yellow) and mono (white) jack. There is therefore the requirement that you have a TV with composite connections or a suitable SCART adaptor.

Installation of the device is a simple affair. Un-



screw the battery cover on the bottom of the joystick, place 4 AA batteries inside (not supplied by the way!), reattach cover, hook up the joystick to the relevant connections on your TV, switch on and away you go.

On start up the highly recognisable Commodore logo is displayed followed by a number of static screens acknowledging Mammoth, the producer of the device, the respective copyright holders of the games and everyone else involved in the production of the device.

For previous C64 owners, the first nostalgic feeling then hits home - The TV screen is filled with the default blue display screen of the original C64 including flashing cursor, number of bytes free and the READY status. Load "*", 8,1

is then typed across the screen, followed by LOADING and then the game selection menu is displayed accompanied by a very catchy SID tune.

Many of the games have come from the Hewson and Epyx stable with the rest being filler. This collection does not by any means represent the best games that were available for the C64.

The menu can be navigated with the up and down movements of the joystick. A game is selected by pressing the left fire button.

The game loads almost instantly, no 4-5 minutes of waiting like on the original C64 so more time for gaming.



**Easter Eggs**

There are some hidden extras within the C64 DTV which can be accessed by wiggling the joystick from side to side while the start-up screens are displayed during power up (or after a reset). Instead of the device taking you to the games menu an alternative numbered list of programs is displayed that can be selected and run.

Selecting the first program will give you the C64 Basic prompt. Here you can gain access to further hidden extras within the C64 DTV by typing in commands on a keyboard which is displayed on the screen when the left fire button is held down. Go on experiment!!

Hacking

The inside of the C64 DTV is effectively a single chip version of the C64. With this in mind a number of individuals have hacked the device to work with many of the original C64 peripherals, like the Commodore 1541 disk drive, as well as enhancing the video output of the device to S-Video.

01.

Final Thoughts

Being a Speccy fan through and through I should really give this little device a bad review, but I can't.

For the UK retail value of £19.99 you are supplied with an amazing device that replicates the look, feel and sound of the C64 games you played as a kid. Over twenty years on and some of the games are still as fresh and addictive as ever. A few of the supplied games may never have been of 'classic' status, but there are enough AAA titles available in the pack to make up for that.

The joystick itself is solid and nostalgic in look and feel. It may take a little getting used to though if you have been playing games with the ergonomic designs of the XBOX and Playstation controllers of today.

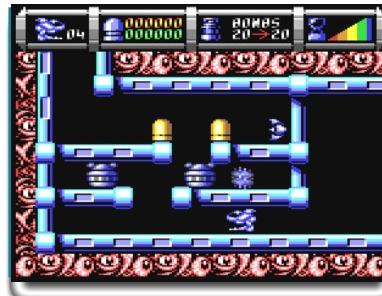
So this device is a big hit in my opinion! The more I play on the device the more its charm rubs off on me. Hopefully Mammoth will launch a second version of this device and include a few more of the classics we fondly remember from yesteryear.

C64 - DTV TOP 3**Uridium**

This is an extremely addictive game of the "one more go" category. The game is set in the depths of space where you have to shoot your way through 16 "dreadnoughts" or stages.

The level ends when you reach the end of the dreadnought and have killed enough enemy ships.

The best game on the DTV by far!!

**Cybernoid 2**

The game is played from a side-on perspective with a flip-screen display that prevents you from going back on yourself. Though there are often a fair few enemies on screen, you are fortunate that your ship has a range of weapons of mass destruction - ranging from rockets to smart bombs which clear the whole screen.

A classic, unforgiving, Shoot Em Up!

**Nebulus**

Nebulus is a cute, green little fella with big eyes, somewhat resembling to a frog, except that he's got a tail.

The aim of the game is to get Nebulus to destroy each tower by simply climbing to the top. The thing is it's not simple as that as loads of obstacles and nasties get in the way of your progress.

Barmy cutesy platform fun!

And the rest:

Alleycat , California Games , Championship Wrestling , Cyberdyne Warrior, Cybernoid 1 , Eliminator , Exolon , Firelord , Gateway to Apshai , Head the Ball , Impossible Mission 1 and 2 , Jumpman Junior , Marauder , Maze Mania , Netherworld, Mission Imposibubble , Paradroid , Pitstop 1 and 2 , Ranarama , Speedball , Summer Games , Super Cycle , Sword Of Fargoal , Winter Games , Zynaps.

SAM Coupé Profile

Name : Sam Coupé
 Company: MGT
 Year: 1989



In 1982 Sir Clive Sinclair launched the ZX Spectrum onto the home computer market – a simplistic computer capable of displaying 7 colours and playing mono-sound. Over the years, the Spectrum was refined and improved by Sinclair with the addition of a 'slightly' better keyboard, 3-channel sound and a whopping 128k of memory.

Amstrad bought the intellectual rights to the Sinclair brand and assets in 1986 after the abysmal failure of Sinclair's next generation computer, the QL. Amstrad thereafter went on to manufacture the ZX Spectrum +2, +2A and +3 models, each of which had a 'true' keyboard, 128k of memory and 3-channel sound as standard as well as the +3 model boasting a 3" disk drive – long loading times were a thing of the past!

Towards the latter part of the 1980's the Spectrum and it's competing 8 bit machines were slowly coming to their end of life and the announcement of the Amiga and Atari ST computers heralded a new 16-bit era that consum-

ers were soon to embrace.

Sam History

In 1989 two entrepreneurial businessmen, Alan Miles and Bruce Gordon, who had in their 'previous life' sold Spectrum parts such as the +D Disc Interface, launched a new computer inspired by the Spectrum known as the SAM Coupé. The company was called MGT (Miles Gordon Technology) and its strategy was to go up against the 16-bit Atari and Amiga computers looming on the horizon with the Sam Coupé.

The first SAM had the option of 256K or 512k of memory and came with a built-in version of BASIC as standard. Unfortunately, on launch, software was still required to be loaded onto the computer through tape via an attached cassette player.

The system was shortly upgraded with a 3½-inch slim-line Citizen disk drive unit but ultimately the drive was flawed, as it required a



long call instruction to be run via DOS to get it to work due to a bug in the SAM's ROM chip. MGT rushed out v2.0 of the ROM for free to SAM users to correct the fault.

The Sam Coupé had four graphical modes. The first mode was capable of emulating a 48K Spectrum through software (hackers soon got 128k games to work in this mode also); the second was an extended Timex mode. The last two modes were the ones mainly used by Sam programmers with Mode 3 capable of displaying a resolution of 512x192 with 4 out of a possible 128 colours and Mode 4 displaying a resolution of 256x192 with 16 colours out of a possible 128 (more could be used by changing the palette registers and using line interrupts to change the palette on different areas of the screen).

The most popular program used at this time was an art package supplied with the SAM called FLASH! written by Bo Jangeborg (The very same programmer of the game Fairlight for the ZX Spectrum).

It was soon evident that MGT needed to boost sales of the Coupé so they took it around the country in the form of a road show. This allowed the company to demonstrate the various games available for the system to the public and sales did increase slightly for a brief period of time as a result of the shows. The glaring problem with the road show's though was that the games being demonstrated were 48K Spectrum games and with the 128k games hitting the market quite regularly at the time it was not exactly a perfect way to show off the machine.

Sadly the Sam Coupé could not fight back against the up and coming 16-bit machines even though it had a fast 8 bit Z80B CPU running at 6Mhz, an ASIC control chip and a custom Philips SAA1099 Sound Chip capable of 6 channel stereo sound.

MGT went bust and folded in 1990 and the

Sam Coupé looked like it was doomed. Miraculously Alan and Bruce managed to raise enough capital to buy the rights to their machine and formed Sam Computers Ltd (or SamCo as it was known) and brought the SAM back on the market with a new model.

The design had not changed that much. The new machine now had 512K of memory as standard and two 3½ inch disc drives. SamCo also announced a 1MB external upgrade and the ability to upgrade to 4Mb using an interface card. With the price of RAM in the UK at the time, this was a hugely expensive upgrade that not many took up and as a result little software took advantage of the memory above 512k. Sales of the re-launched Sam Coupé started to flag again.

SamCo set up their own software house called Revelation and several excellent games came to light such as Prince of Persia, Lemmings and Pipe Dream. But even this could not save the organisation resulting in SamCo going into voluntary liquidation in 1992.

After SamCo's demise a company called West Coast was formed to carry on manufacturing and selling the Coupé, albeit in very low quantities. A SAM 'elite' model was launched in late 1994 that was simply a re-badged Coupé with a built in Printer interface and a tweaked ROM. Sam's were sold via West Coast until early 1999 until Bob Brenchley, one of the founders of West Coast, disappeared along with the SAM/Spectrum magazine he edited called "Format".

Fan Base

The Sam Coupé's has consistently had an extremely loyal fan base of the several thousand that continue to keep the flame alight for machine. The community has produced software and disk magazines for the machine but it's most common use has been the production of software for the 'demo' scene. Taking advantage of the advanced graphic shifting capabili-

ties of Modes 3 & 4 and the much larger memory space many of the coders of the ZX Spectrum moved across to the SAM. Several Amiga tunes were converted as the Sam's SAA1099 sound chip could handle them and more using its 6-channel capability.

Colin Piggot developed the Quazar Surround Soundcard back in 1995 giving the Sam the capability of multi-channel surround sound. He has also edited 12 issues of the magazine 'Sam Revival' that he started producing back in 2002 as well as being responsible for the somewhat infamous 'Sam In A Can'. More details of Colin's Coupé developments can be found at www.samcoupe.com.

Edwin Blink and Co developed a programme called BDOS (an extended version of Master DOS) and the ATOM interface to allow connection of IDE Hard Drives in the equation.

It came to a point that many people still wanted to buy a Sam Coupé but they were no longer available to purchase. Until that is Colin Piggot managed to source several SAMs in disrepair and repaired them to sell on back in 2004.

As emulation on various modern platforms became a phenomenon the SAM hardware became an even more prized possession with the computer going for well over £100 on the rare occasions it appears on E-bay.

The Sam Coupé has now gracefully faded into retro history but has to be recognised as the wannabe system that put up one of the longest fights in home computer history for consumer success - nearly 10 years. Some say it's demise can be put down to MGT's poor marketing strategy in linking the Coupé with the Spectrum. Many consumers perceived the Sam to be just a souped up Speccy and nothing more so stayed well clear of it!

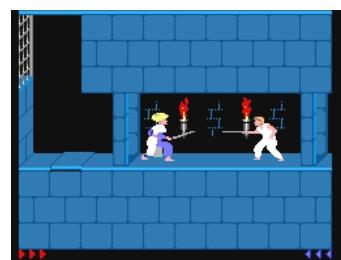
Long live the Coupé!



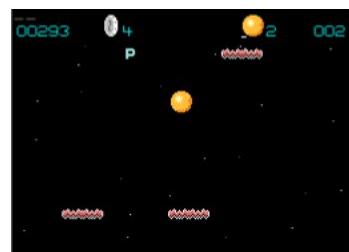
▲ Manic Miner



▲ Defender of the Earth



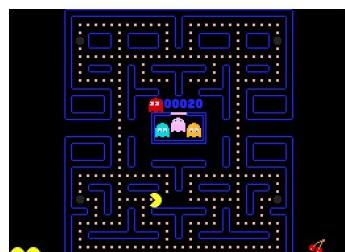
▲ Prince of Persia



▲ Astrobally



▲ Lemmings



▲ Pacman

RETRO FUSION

BE SENSIBLE



During the late 80's and early 90's much of my youth was spent playing games by the legendary software houses, 'Sensible Software'.

Sensible Software brought us such classics as Wizball, Parallax and Meglomania on the Commodore 64 and a number of years later Cannon Fodder and the infamous Sensible Soccer on the Commodore Amiga.

So what happens when Jon Hare the ex-head of Sensible Software, Mike Montgomery the ex-head of the Bitmap Brothers and John Phillips the ex-technical director of the Bitmap Brothers get together for a chat over a beer? Well the formation of a new company Tower Studios is the answer.

Tower Studios was set-up in early 2004 with the intention of putting together an experienced team that have a proven track record of producing top quality games. Their first task—convert Sensible Soccer and Cannon Fodder for the mobile phone!.



It is funny how you sometimes find yourself staring at a blank sheet of paper and wondering where to begin.

I have been doing this for a while now this evening as has happened throughout my working life from time to time. It takes a while of living with yourself to have faith that your creative spirit is always there somewhere inside you, lurking behind the cups of tea and distracted conversations that so often clutter one's life when you know it is time to perform but somehow your heart and your brain really don't give a toss just now.

Sometimes I wonder just how much the sabotaging of our freedom as games creators has taken it out of my creative drive, these days I am more likely to respond to a conversation about doing the next off the wall thing with a cynical and patronising look of resignation rather than an enthusiastic and eager desire to push further and further in the pursuit of creative gold. That pioneering spirit that carried us all the way through the 80s and early 90s was the same force that drove alchemists, prospectors and artists to the discovery and creation of new and great things.

And all of the games that we created back on the C64 started with a clear screen, a blank sheet of paper, and a pair of open and eager minds. However back in those days we were also given a clear road down which to drive our ideas, a road uncluttered by diversions and no entry signs. It was like striding across the virgin soil of a newly discovered continent and planting our banner in the sand whenever we got to a particularly interesting place that we wanted to claim for ourselves.

Nowadays we are only allowed to go on creative package tours, neatly put together for us to ensure that we all behave ourselves and nothing gets too out of hand. The only exploration allowed is perhaps to a theme park or maybe if you are really lucky an afternoon strolling along the beach, as long as you are back on the coach by 5.30pm. Given that most people who have worked in the games industry since 1995 have only experienced the package tour style of game creation, so popular now amongst the games retailing and buying community, it is no surprise at all that when confronted with a blank sheet of paper they quickly start to draw up the lines of a package tour style game, just so that they can get their bearings.

The difference between most of the post genesis generation and most of us whinging old timers is that they have never experienced the joy of turning silicon into gold, most have never been given the luxury of this freedom and therefore have not experienced the exhilaration that it can bring, so when they are faced with a blank sheet of paper they do not have enough faith in themselves that they can come up with something both truly original worthy of filling that space. Instead they take the safe option of getting something down quick by drawing from the best games of the previous 3 years and hope that no-one notices or cares about their dull plagiarism. In fact many people who work like this are so devoid of truly original thought that they probably have no concept of what else might be done from a creative stand point.

However the object of this discussion is not purely to gripe endlessly about the creative shackles in which we have all become accustomed to living. The reality of the current situation in games creation is that it is at a potential crisis point and although we can simply state our unhappiness that the magic has gone, that in its own will not achieve anything. Surely the challenge now for the truly creative in this industry is to take whatever role they are given in whatever product that they are working on, be it a Barbie game on mobile phones or Ernie Els 'Easy Golf' on PC and try to work their magic within the new confines of a highly commercialised environment. It may not be groundbreaking in the way that we used to know, but those days are long gone and they are not coming back any time in the near future. So in the meantime our choice is to go home and sulk and talk about the good old days again, (usually over a beer outside a computer show somewhere) or decide to acknowledge the new environment in which we find ourselves and adapt to it. It has taken me almost five years to really come to terms with where the games industry finds itself now, particularly in this country. If the UK game industry were some native variety of wildlife then its current status would be endangered, but not yet nearing extinction.

"It is the job of all of us who care about the games industry now to nurse it through this"

So what do we do with the situation, well it seems fairly obvious to me that one of the most important things is to remain active and to ensure that the current working games industry population does not shrink back into the critical list. And to a certain extent that means keeping companies alive first and doing groundbreaking products second. Anyone who has ever really gone for it creatively in games will tell you that it is expensive and risky as the money is rarely made back on the investment until six months after the release of the game. The other problem is that the success rate of these kinds of games is probably one in four, which is the reason why nearly all publishers are so loathed to take a gamble on these kinds of games while development costs are so high. So my conclusion at the moment is to focus one's creativity within the relatively narrow boundaries of commercially driven games, as for now it's the most prudent and sensible thing to do.

Now is a time of waiting and strategising, of making small rather than big steps forward, of nudging things on rather than making leaps of discovery. But do not underestimate the importance of this phase, without any creative input games will become stale and eventually die a miserable death, but with too much creative input games at present will be considered too risky and commercially unviable and will never see the light of day in any case.

It is the job of all of us who care about the games industry now to nurse it through this phase of its life without upsetting it too much. The industry has developed a deep and unhealthy dependency on the retail, sports & media industries that have been invited to dominate it and weaning it off of their poisoned nipples is going to take time and care and some rather persuasive, and tenderly delivered, advise that maybe it is time that our baby thought about moving on to some solids or back to mother's milk, anything but the shopping mall trash that currently makes up the bulk of its daily feed.



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The encyclopedia of Game.Machines

Coffee table books on retro gaming are becoming commonplace, with stores such as Amazon and the like stocking more and more titles by the day it would seem. One of the latest additions to the increasing inventory of bedtime reading comes in the form of 'The Encyclopedia Of Game Machines', written by Winnie Forster, published by GAMEplan, and costing £17.95 plus postage.

This 224 page book attempts to catalogue every computer and console ever released, covering the launch of well over 400 machines in the last 33 or so years, in full colour, with appropriate technological and historical information included where applicable.

What sets this book apart from anything that has come before it is the fact that it sets out to be a worldwide encyclopaedia as apposed to only covering US, European or Japanese machines, something of a first in this books genre.

So, with the promise of being something special, does 'The Encyclopedia Of Game Machines' live up to its boasts and claims?

Initially I was pleasantly surprised. The book itself looks and feels like a quality product, the paper stock used doesn't feel cheap and nasty and it is generally pleasing on the eye. The type used is easy to read, and as you would expect, is constant throughout. The pictures however are what this book is all about with some 200 extra images having been included in this 1.5 edition of the book which really make it something other than a directory of computers and consoles. It also helps that the images used are of decent quality and have been worked into the layout extremely well too.

After an explanation of the page layout and an introduction to game storage media (which includes both technical data and pictures illustrating virtually every type of media ever used) the book then proceeds to categorise the computers and consoles it documents by the authors created 'eras'. There are five different eras each containing machines that were prominent to that particular time in gaming history, and each era has a preceding editorial which goes some way to describing the nature of the scene, as well as highlighting some of the important events and games of the period.

The pages devoted to the machines themselves are well written, and are more editorial than technical, with pictures and sales data complimenting the brief history of the machine itself. Computers and consoles covered in this book range from the Magnavox Odyssey with its 16 games (released in the USA in 1972), through to the BBC Micro

(released in the UK in 1982), right through to the SNK Neo Geo (released in Japan in 1990), and ending with the Nintendo DS and Sony PSP (both released in Japan in 2004), with many known and some not so well known machines covered in some degree of detail, in between.

If the front part of the book is for those of us who want to reminisce on the machines we had as children, or want to get some more information on a possible future purchase to add to the collection, then the appendix at the back of this book will be heaven for all the 'geeks' out there. Contained within the final 17 pages are extended technical details of all the machines that are mentioned within the preceding pages. Where available, the author has included such information as CPU clock speed, ram and rom details, graphic and sound details and pretty much anything else that is important to that particular machine. These details are presented in a table so that you can easily compare one machine to another, so like we said a section for the geeks!

So, does the book live up to its claim of being 'The Encyclopedia of Game Machines'? Well, after a few hours of reading and the time to take it all in, I can honestly say that it does a good job of it, although I would have to agree with the author in his preface, that it is far from complete or perfect. As a written collection of information relating to computers and consoles it makes interesting reading, however it leaves me with the feeling of wanting more. The lack of pages devoted to each machine means that there is very little information relating to its history, games and achievements, which is something I would have expected to see in an encyclopaedia. Which brings me on nicely to the next part of this review, that being the errors within it. Admittedly, a book of this size cannot be expected to get every word and picture 100 percent correct, especially with the diversity of material it is trying to cover, however the biggest error of all must be the mis-spelling of the word encyclopaedia on the front cover and throughout the book (it's missing an 'a' after the 'p') and can only be put down to poor editing. As time progresses however other errors will rear their head, and on the GamePlan website there is already a page devoted to updates and errata with some 20 or so entries already documented.

Overall it is a good addition to the book collection, but the combined price tag along with the feeling that it is not 'complete' enough might disappoint some people at the end of the day.

More information on this book can be found on the official website at www.game-machines.co.uk.

Plans are afoot for the publication of a follow up book looking at all the peripherals released for each of the retro systems. Watch this space for details!

Sinclair presented its colour successor to the ZX 81: Stripped down to the minimum – neither need nor graphics chip, no joystick port and no keyboard – the Spectrum became England's most successful home computer.

Sinclair Spectrum

GB, 1982

Simultaneously to its rival C64, the Spectrum bested the second wave of home computers. Unlike the Commodore, Clive Sinclair's invention was a local phenomenon though. British gamers and developers loved the cheap and transparent hardware but on the continent, the Spectrum played a secondary role. Stateside, only a half-hearted attempt at marketing the Z80 based micro was started, while in Japan no one bothered.

After the first version was shipped with 16 K RAM, now 48 K became the standard. CPU, memory and one expansion port on the back – no components to write home

about. Instead of a plastic case, it only had tiny keys. Individual rubber keys with a new case and as the Spectrum became the most popular

To beat up the low-budget variants needs, including memory, popped up all released two expansions for the Microdrive's storage capacity of 80 K. The inter

Unit sold Number of Game shrapnel Games developed unit



The Tramiel clan extended the Atari range with a 'Jackintosh'. Despite similar technology, the 520 ST and its variants couldn't match the audio and visuals of Commodore's Amiga.

Atari ST

USA, 1985



In 1984, while developing its 16-Bit computer range, Atari invested in the Amiga company, owned by ex-employee Jay Miner. However, a bullet negotiating-style drove the hardware team to competitor Commodore, which produced the 68000 and missed a computer of the same

small drive and drawer symbols accompanied the Tramiel Operating System (TOS). The Amiga was released to more than 10,000 units and was supported by various manufacturers. 1987 turned out to be the successful year. In the US, the real-time 500 Doctor Master was released, along with Star Control.

Musicians and G.I.T. artists brought their Atari to the 12" monitor ST 140 and got a street beat onto the screen.



Konami's character never left the PC-Engine, but when they did, it was something special. Dracula X (1990).

Pixel perfect coin-op conversions of R-Type and Galaga 88 proved to Japanese gamers (and a band of western import freaks), that NEC and Hudson had created a milestone – unfortunately, not everybody did very soon that nobody was thinking of a release in Europe. The US version named Turbo Grade 10 arrived late and came under fire from Sega and Nintendo. The outcome was that outside of Japan, the PC-Engine was subjected to obscurity.

Don't be like Baloo look somewhere familiar to you? Maybe you've met her in later games by Magic Castle, Dragon Quest, in Ogre Battle or in Final Fantasy Tactics.





Ultimarc

If you want to build your own MAME arcade cabinet, replace worn out arcade components on your cabinet or even convert a JAMMA cabinet to work with MAME then visit www.ultimarc.com for all the arcade components and info you will need.

Best Prezzie Ever!



ZX Spectrum



When I was a kid, there was a time when the best present you could get for Christmas was a bike. I remember my first bike, my grandparents gave it to me for Christmas way back in 1976. It was red, had a bell, mudguards that practically covered both wheels and a basket on the front and back designed to carry your shopping home from the local store. For my size, the bike was large and clearly more suited to the requirements of a young lady than the 7-year old lad that I was.

My grandfather used to push me around the estate it, holding the back of the seat to ensure I didn't fall over. Then one day without any warning he decided to let go. All I could hear was "Keep pedalling lad" and through fear of falling off, my little legs kept going. It felt good, until that is, I came to a bend in the road. I soon realised that I didn't know how to navigate corners or for that matter how to stop either, so in my infinite wisdom I decided that the best course of action was to just keep on pedalling! I hit the neighbour's wall at high speed and unceremoniously fell to the floor. I got up, brushed myself down, examined my new bruises and looked back, through tear filled eyes, towards my grand father who was still huffing and puffing from the struggle he had keeping up with me. He gave me a big proud grin. Having a bike was so cool – this surely must be the Best Christmas Present Ever! (Or so I thought at the time of course).

As each Christmas thereafter went by, there was always the hope that Santa would bring me a new bike to replace the clapped out one from the previous years. Sometimes he did, but mostly he let me down.

My family was not rich, not by any stretch of the imagination. We lived in a council house in a nice little town by the sea in West Wales.

Christmas was, on reflection, a burdening time for my family as they tried to ensure that my sister and I had a nice selection of presents under the tree every Christmas morning.

that my sister and I had a nice selection of presents under the tree every Christmas morning. It was obvious that other families in the area were much better off than us and their kids always had, or had to have, all the new toys and gadgets that were constantly being launched onto the consumer market.

My First Computer

It was in spring 1982 that I came across my first computer, the Sinclair ZX81. One of the rich kids from the town brought his ZX81 to the Cub Scout meeting at the local Community Centre. I remember the grown-ups fussing over the device whilst plugging it into a black and white portable television. I had a look, and then carried on playing British Bulldog with the rest of the group - and that was that. During a Geography lesson a year later a classmate brought his computer to class and demonstrated a BASIC program he had written for the teacher (teacher's pet or what?). The program took some data and from it produced graphs and averages on the TV screen that could also be printed to paper – I was gob smacked. It was like "how the hell did you do that?". The computer he used was called the Sinclair ZX Spectrum, and it was during that Geography lesson in 1983 that my true love affair with computers started.

I quickly came to the conclusion that I wanted a computer and having seen the ZX Spectrum in action, and not really acknowledging the existence of any of its market competitors (still don't), that was the one for me, and so naturally the peer pressure began:

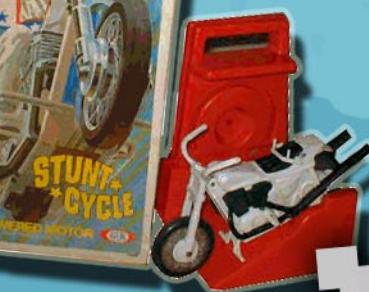
"Muuum, Can I have a computer pleeeease!!!"

Over the months leading up to Christmas I gradually persuaded my parents to agree to buy me one. The justifications I used for owning one were a pretty standard affair:

"Well so and so has got one" (Now how many times did I use that one whilst under the wings of my parents!)

"I can use it to help with my homework!"

"It only costs £129.99!"



£129.99 back in the 80's was, and still is, a lot of money, and for my parents it was an extortionate amount, especially for a single present for just one of their kids.

Shopping Time

The price tag, it turns out, was for the 16k machine and after doing a little research it was evident that the preferred games playing version was in fact the 48k model priced at £149.99. Of course playing games was not on my justification list but somehow my parents agreed to get the 48k model for me. And so the months passed and the seasons changed and the School disco came and went...

A couple of weekends before Christmas my family and I travelled to the local town and visited WH Smith. Smith's was my favourite shop and at the time it was where I often spent my weekly fifty pence pocket money on pencils, crayons and colouring books, or the latest Whizzer and Chips comic. As luck would have it the store had just opened its new computer section. Within the new section we were confronted by row upon row of empty game cassette cases, all laid out in a massive display, each one adjourned with the colourful marketing imagery depicting the game held within

On the top shelf were the larger empty boxes of the ZX Spectrum computer itself and cassette players of varying makes and models. I reached up and took one of the Spectrum boxes down, my heart beating against my rib cage with excitement.





I read details on the side and back and without further ado walked over to the cashier and handed over the empty box.

My mum counted out the money from her purse and handed it over to the cashier. In return I was given a large WH Smith bag that contained my new computer, a receipt that confirmed that my mum had just spent £149.99 on me - bless! and a penny change. I was the happiest boy in Wales.

A number of days later I persuaded my parents that I should really check out the new purchase to make sure it was working ok, using the old ploy of "just imagine me finding out on Christmas Day that it was faulty!" (Now how many have you done this with Christmas presents from loved ones that you just can't wait to get your hands on?!?). Anyway, for a brief 15 minutes in early December I had my Speccy in the grasps of my hands, plugged into the family TV, loading some program off the Horizons tape. Nothing actually finished loading before my mum ordered it to be packed away, happy that it was working ok.

I had received enough Christmas money to buy a couple of games. Possibly against my better judgement I decided to choose Manic Miner and Lunar Jetman. These two games are now recognised as classics of their time, however I chose them because the front cover inlays looked nice! How deceived I would be on subsequent purchases.

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve was soon upon my sleepy Welsh town. Now when your young and excited about an up and coming event, a day can sometimes feel like an eternity. My way of thinking was that if I went to bed early and fell asleep, then Christmas Day would arrive much quicker and I then could get my hands on my Spectrum a lot sooner! So 9pm came and off to bed I went in the hope that I would somehow enter the land of dreams in double quick time.

Not a chance!

At 2am, with my parents soundly sleeping in the next bedroom, I tiptoed downstairs, picked the present that I was interested in and tiptoed back upstairs again.

I carefully unwrapped the package, took the polystyrene casing out of the box and then laid all the components on my bed. I had before me the ZX Spectrum 48K computer, a power lead,

an audio lead, TV aerial cable, the aforementioned Horizons tape and a load of paperwork including the user manual and some warranty cards. I excitedly set up the Spectrum with my 14" Phillips TV (and a cassette player I had lying around) and went about loading Manic Miner. After four or five minutes of waiting I was in gaming bliss! I played those two games until the early hours of the morning and then slept through till lunchtime on Christmas Day, dreaming of Eugene's lair and shooting asteroids.

I played my Speccy all through the Christmas holidays, often on the larger, super deluxe 20" family TV downstairs (only if Coronation Street was not on mind you!).

And so began a long, beautiful relationship between myself and my computer. Christmas' thereafter saw my family and I adorn my Spectrum with many gifts including an Interface One and ZX Microdrive, A Kempston mouse, a Currah Speech Synthesiser, a DK Tronics keyboard, an Alphacom 32 printer and various joystick interfaces and accompanying joysticks.

With all these extras, not to mention the games I had amassed, this little computer entertained me through many evenings during my teenage years. As well letting me play an enormous collection of classic games, I was able to use the computer to teach myself BASIC by typing in listings from the popular magazines of the time.

I went on to write my O Level project in a language called Mega Basic that was endorsed by Your Sinclair. The language boasted colour windows, free typing (no more pressing J to LOAD) and a modern development environment. Over a few weeks I developed a 48k program that managed my all bank accounts in glorious technicolor and 5.1 surround sound (well mono beeps!). I documented my design and printed it out, along with the listing, on my Alphacom 32 printer.

Before I knew it I had left school, gained a degree in computer studies and then got my first job in the IT Industry as a programmer. Now 10 years later I still work in IT and often tell youngsters in the industry about my first computer..

King of the Castle

The toys you can see filling the sides of this article were good for their time but once played, most were pushed under the bed, only to be retrieved on those long, ultra-boring, wintry evenings when mum and dad thought it would be good fun to play 'Frustration' for a couple of hours!

The Speccy took pride of place in my bedroom and saw arcade and adventure action daily until well into my late teens!

In fact my current career can be linked to the computing foundation given to me by the ZX Spectrum.

I give my Speccy the award of 'Best Christmas Present Ever!' ever! Computers, consoles and Christmas' have come and gone over the years but for me my Speccy has yet to be knocked off its ever-deserving throne.

Bring on the next contender!!!



Movie Review

It's hard to believe that over 21 years have passed since the original Ghostbusters movie was released causing a global slime-fuelled craze back in 1984. Now think back to the Ghostbusters theme music, you know the Ray Parker Jr one. Remember it? Now start playing the tune in your mind, "Duh, Duh, Duhh, do duh, duh, GHOSTBUSTERS!!! Now play that music along in your mind as you read the rest of this review. Shout out "GHOSTBUSTERS!" if you like...

Unlike many of the blockbuster movies of today that tend to be humourless and pompous, Ghostbusters was, and still is, both a funny and intelligent paranormal roller coaster ride of a movie that never fails to deliver.

The movie was directed by Ivan Reitman who once said he had discovered the comedic formula for films to be simply the brain, the heart and the mouth. In this movie the brain is the Egon Spengler character, played by Harold Ramis, who supplies an endless number of witty one liners; the heart is Raymond Stantz, the loveable fool played by Dan Aykroyd; the mouth, or smart-ass, is obviously Peter Venkman, played by Bill Murray, who cannot stop



▲ Scary stuff!

making fun of everything!

We have to take time out to mention the fantastic, charismatic supporting characters in this movie.

There is a 4th Ghostbuster that joins the team in the shape of the cheerful Winston Zeddemore (Ernie Hudson); Sigourney Weaver who plays the very spiritual Dana Barrat; Rick Moranis who plays the moronic Louis Tully, Dana's neighbour; the eccentric receptionist Janine (Annie Potts) who screams out with delight, "We got one!" The star supporting 'actor' for me though must be Slimer the mischievous ghost who goes round 'sliming' people with ectoplasm goo and making the film all the more funnier for it.

"He slimed me", became a well-known quote in the playground back in 1984. Even though I am a huge



▲ The infamous Ecto-1

fan of Bill Murray, his humour and the many films he has starred in (Groundhog Day specifically springs to mind) Slimer steals the show for me.

For the time the effects were pretty special and even after watching the films of today have stood up to the test of time really well. This was 1984 and even though the Star Wars films had set a new standard for special effects, the visual entertainment provided by Ghostbusters is fresh and at the time was unlike anything that had been experienced by the cinemagoer before. The ghosts are convincing as they fly around the screen, the ghost catching equipment is impressive in its operation and the culmination of the cult Stay Puft Marshmallow Man stomping through the streets of New York are testament to the quality and improvement of the SFX techniques of the time.

The film was nominated for numerous awards including Oscars for best song, courtesy of Ray "Who you Gonna call?" Parker Jr, and the special effects, which even though now arguably slightly dated worked really well with the wacky style of the movie. As well as the now infamous theme tune, there are numerous other great songs in the film including one by The Bus Boys that climbed the charts and a rather creepy song by Mick Smiley.

The time spent by the scriptwriters, special effect technicians and production designers all have their merit and make this movie as well as the actors who convincingly portray their characters on screen.

Conclusion

After watching this movie again for the first time in 20 or so years after seeing it in the cinema, and with the understanding and intelligence that comes with age, I now appreciate the many comedic lines and interactions that take place with the characters in the film as well as the visual eye candy. As a child I remember being scared by some of the 'horror' elements of the story – ghost and ghouls under the bed and all that – but now I am more than impressed with the dry, witty, intelligent humour that is riddled throughout this film.

The 'Saturday Night Live' show that brought Aykroyd and Murray together is the very reason and essence for the Ghostbusters movie and the comedic genius status gained by both these actors on that stand up show is evident throughout the film.

This film has something for everyone no matter what age you are – a movie that has it all, good acting, good script, humour, intelligence and good looks. A rarity these days by any standards.

So what you waiting for, go and get SLIMED!



▲ Boys and their toys

GHOSTBUSTERS

Movie Synopsis

The film starts in New York City where the main characters are three Columbia University scientists that have been laid off from their jobs after their grant expires. Desperate for money, they come up with the idea of starting a fake ghost-busting company. Unfortunately 'real' ghosts start popping up around the city and their ghost-busting talents become in great demand.



▲ Nice Doggy!

The guys invent a whole set of tools of the trade that they call 'toys' in order to catch the ghosts they hunt like their car, called 'Ecto 1', that is as mad and crazy as its owners and 'nuclear accelerators' that allow the busters to grab and manoeuvre ghosts over traps that jump up and pull them into safe storage.

The men become a citywide phenomenon. The team has its doubters though especially in the form of the Walter Peck (William Atherton) character who manages to get the guys thrown into jail for what he perceives is fraudulent activity – in his mind there is no such thing as ghosts!!

An ethereal bad-assed ghost called Gozer then makes an appearance in the Dana Barrett



▲ Marshmallow Man

(Sigourney Weaver) characters apartment and starts to cause havoc in the city. Dana's fridge (!) proves to be a portal into another world full of ghosts and demons. Dana's next-door neighbour, Louis Tully (Rick Moranis), is also getting some apparition problems of his own that to urgently need resolving.

So the ghost busting team are released from jail to save the day!!

Does this synopsis sound corny! It does doesn't it. And it's meant to be!!

Goofs

- Inconsistent number and position of splattered eggs on counter as camera angles change.
- Crew or equipment visible as the camera pans down on the rooftop when the gargoyles come alive, the soundstage floor can briefly be seen at the bottom left corner [Widescreen version only]
- When all the ghosts are escaping across downtown Manhattan, several ghost trails are not fully animated and abruptly cut off at the bottom right of the screen [Widescreen version only]
- The camera crew are visible after "neutronizing" Gozer on the rooftop, as they walk off the platform, the folds in a dark curtain can be seen in the background behind Ray.



Trivia

- The role of Louis Tully was originally written for John Candy.
- The role of Peter Venkman was originally written for John Belushi.
- The role of Winston was originally written for Eddie Murphy.
- In the original script, Gozer appeared as a normal man in a business suit.
- On the set, Dan Aykroyd referred to the "Slimer" ghost as the ghost of John Belushi.
- The "Marshmallow" goo was actually shaving cream.

GB GAME REVIEW ROUNDUP



The C64 version of the Ghostbusters game is by far the best version of the 7 systems here. The graphics are crisp and detailed and the C64 version has the best synthesized speech and sound. The title screen plays a SID version of the Ray Parker Jr. theme tune, complete with lyrics and bouncing ball to help you sing along. The game starts with you getting a loan from the bank. After buying your equipment a map of New York is displayed. Driving to one of the flashing houses switches the game to outside the house where you have to capture the ghost that's haunts the building. Once caught you are paid and then taken back to the streets of New York. Eventually the Marshmallow makes an appearance as well as the Gatekeeper! on the New York Streets. It is your job to limit the damage they cause!



The Spectrum version compares favourably to the C64. Everything looks and plays in a similar way to the C64 version, and they've even got the speech in there! The music is OK as well. Once you look past the colour clash, the tiny ghosts, and disappearing bits of graphic, it plays well enough.



The graphics on the Amstrad CPC range of computers are quite close to the C64 version and the game plays the same as the C64 version. Sound is reasonable, although the speech is perhaps not as good as the Spectrum.



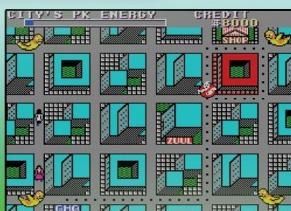
The NES version has the most complex driving section of the lot. You have a fuel meter, variable speed and the chance to refuel by picking up barrels. Like the Master System, a shop lets you buy equipment during the game. Sound is perhaps a weak point.



Activision did well to squeeze the game into a 2600 cart. There is of course less detail in the graphics. One element that has been dropped is the perspective on the capture screen – where you can move up and down the screen on other 8-bit machines, the 2600 version has a single plane of movement. There is no choice of car either, just the standard Cadillac. The Atari 800 version is much better, with all the options and better graphics.

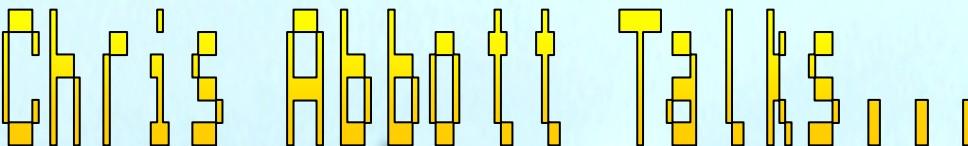


With a few minor changes, this is very similar to the C64 version. This time there are cars and obstacles in the street – collide with them and it wastes time. There are also more ghosts on the capture screen, but you can switch control between the two Ghostbusters with their vertical beams. The PK energy is a coloured bar which gradually fills up. You also get a count down of how far you have to travel to get to the next alert. Running into the Gatekeeper and Keymaster (shown as little people instead of the key and lock symbols from other versions) on the map screen also reduces your money. The music is quite good, sounding off key in a couple of places. But all in all it's a good version on an 8-bit console.



With an increase in power comes a different type of game. This time it's a platform game with some really nice graphics. The characters you control are cartoon versions of the people from the film, with big heads and small bodies. Instead of a map of New York, you have to choose between potential jobs that offer an amount of money depending on how difficult the level is. Different weapons add a strategic element to how you go about finishing a level. The large enemies at the end of the levels are tricky to beat. Background music is fine, but the theme tune is slightly disappointing.





Christopher feel that nostalgia isn't what it used to be? A trip into the past can often be a confusing event for someone only dabbling in retro, whose interest is more nostalgic than technical.

Why confusing? Well, let's take the Commodore logo rose tinted glasses off for a minute. In this world, 80-95% of everything is pretty bad, the level depending on your innate cynicism, whether you've rowed with your significant other and how good the weather is. It was as true in 1985 as it is now. The years haven't been kind to many games, except in one or two ways which I'll get to later. It will often happen that a fan, whether it be in MAME or Gamebase 64, will load up a much loved game, and feel... disappointed.

And you feel guilty?

So, you play it, determined to force yourself to enjoy it. You'll enjoy it if it kills you! You're determined to get back those nostalgic feelings.

And yet, apart from the "oh yeah, there it is" flash of feeling when you see the title screen to the game, that's pretty much the payoff.

Of course, lest I be mobbed by rampaging Wizball fans, the right game can magically transcend time, where the gameplay happens to be self-contained, self-consistent, addictive and, above all, still fun to play. This is the magical 5% of games which are still worth playing. But still, most games, are, quite frankly, terrible. Now, and then.

Let's look at the DTV: it's an amazing technical achievement because somehow they managed to sweet talk a technical genius (Jeri Ellsworth, designer of the C1) to utilise already existing technology to create them a million-selling product while working at merely consultancy rates. But the games? You can count the actual ones you might spend any amount of time playing on one hand. They didn't even get the feel of the joystick the same as the Competition Pro they went to the bother of licencing.

So, it's all about nostalgia. But what is this feeling we're trying to recreate? And how best DO you relive your youth?

Do you remember the feeling on a Saturday morning when you were young? The weekend had just begun, and you're going to town to look in WH Smiths, or hang round the smokey computer shop and chat, or mosey on round to your mates and talk about the latest games. The feeling of excitement: almost impossible to describe in words. Think back to the Saturday mornings of your youth.

That's the feeling we're after. And you're not

going to get it by looking at things, whether it be 80s TV or retro computer games, for two simple reasons:

1) The Primacy effect

Basically states that something has a bigger effect on you if you're seeing it for the first time. You'll never forget the first time you saw a computer game, or kissed a girl. However: no matter how much you try to force another experience to live up to that: it will never. If you want that feeling again, find something new to be excited about.

2) The eyes are connected to the logic centres of the brain

Out of all your senses, the eyes are the ones that receive the most concentrated processing power. They're also the least forgiving of the senses. And your perception changes over time. When you've seen a game running in hi-res 50 frames a second at photorealism, it's difficult to

get as excited over blocky atari graphics. Looking at a game years on, it's very difficult not to compare it with the visual stimulation you get now. Games which, at the time, were trying to be realistic, now look silly.

So, how do you get your nostalgia fix?

There are two senses uniquely able to deliver the feeling you need. The first is smell, of course. Remember the smokey air of the computer shops, mixed with the scent of cardboard boxes? Remember the unique smell of "school computer room"? Remember the smell of dew-wet sheep's coat on a Saturday morning?

That's what I'm talking about. Sometimes I wonder if the magic "atmosphere" at a Back in Time Live concert is merely a function of everybody smoking and sweating, along with the ozone from the old computers!

But there's another sure-fire way to nostalgia, and it goes a long way to explaining why I'm sitting here writing this. Music.

It just takes a sound or a musical phrase to take you right back to the feelings you had when you first heard it. I remember the computer shop where I first loaded up Bogg Demo 1, and the one where I heard Crazy Comets for the first time. Do I remember it because of the way the games looked? No, I remember it because of how stunned I was by the music.

In the same way, I find most 80s programs I used to like boring. Even Knight Rider (sorry Mark Knight, if that is your real name, MICHAEL!). But the theme tunes still capture me today, as does the pop music I grew up with. I can't listen to "I feel for you" without a certain feeling and mental picture of school, looking forward to after school



Chris Who?



▲ Chris on the left with Retrovision Markie

Facts about Chris Abbott:

- 1) He has a degree in Psychology. So he's watching you.
- 2) He is currently programming a world leading thingy called "Mobile Phone Wizard". If you have to ask, you don't want to know!
- 3) He is a father of twins. They're awfully clever.
- 4) His first ever C64 General MIDI file was "Action Biker" targeted at the AWE32.
- 5) His favourite game is "Ratchet and Clank". It used to be Spyro the Dragon, but hey, a man can change.
- 6) Pet hates include repetitive people, people who repeat themselves, and people who keep saying the same thing over and over again.
- 7) His first computer was an Atari 400 16K, and the first game he ever played on it was "Preppie". After falling in love with the music in that game, the rest is history.
- 8) His Karma is lacking a knob.
- 9) He's produced audio CDs, MIDIs and stuff of C64 remixes. You might have heard them.

games that were only worth it for the music.

That's why music is the most important key to your youth: treasure it in all its forms. And music, magically, has the ability to transform itself and still keep that spirit of nostalgia in a way that most retro remakes, no matter how good, can only dream of.

And somehow, hearing it performed live by skilled musicians: the combination of the visceral thrill of watching genius at work combined with the fact that the piece still has the same nostalgic thrill as the original, and you've got the perfect experience. It's just a pity it can't be described: only experienced.

So: music and smell. Your two nostalgic friends. Treat them well, and they shall reward you with youth. Or, you might just get burps and farts.

People are strange like that!

the indispensable guide to...

OK, so you've decided that you want to do some treasure hunting at your local car boot sale, but you've never been before and don't know where to start. Well, fear not as I now give to you the benefit of seven years car boot sale experience – an indispensable guide from an old timer!

Most people new to car boot sales think they will be able to turn up and find everything they ever wanted and more. Not so. You may hear people lamenting about how years ago you used to be able to turn up at Ten O'clock and take your pick from the Game & Watches and boxed Vectrex consoles. Well this may have been true once, but those days are gone my friends. To do well at a car boot sale, you have to know exactly what you're doing, what you should be looking for, what you should avoid and how you should behave...

Planning

The first thing you should do the day before a car boot sale is plan. Plan everything.

First off, check the forecast for the weekend. If it's going to hammer it down all weekend fields will be soggy and farmers don't like that, so any outdoor car boot sales will be cancelled. If you are lucky enough to have indoor ones nearby then great, but bad weather generally puts off everyone – buyers & sellers alike.

Secondly, you need to know where all the car boot sales are in your area and plan your route. Most local papers / free papers have a car boot sale section in them on a Friday – make sure you get it every week. Your paper will not only list the regular car boot sales, but 'one off' car boot sales such as those at schools, hospitals or church halls. The school car boot sales are often goldmines for the retro games hunter, but more of that later...

So once you have your weekend car boot sales listings you need to plan a route. I would say you should start with the biggest first, as the bigger ones normally start earlier. I tend to do the furthest away first, opting to get there just as it starts, then work my way back home through all the other booties. The smaller ones tend to be less busy and start later, and I can often turn up as late as Nine O'clock and still find some good stuff.

You may have two really big car boot sales running at the same time where you live and have to choose the best one. If this scenario happens, I would advise you to choose the one with the least traders (stalls selling stolen razor blades, mobile phone covers or dodgy plaster cast gnomes & hedgehogs) or choose the one nearest the smaller car boot sales, so to cut down your traveling time between sites.

It should be noted here that you want to be arriving at car boot sales as early as possible. There is no point turning up at a massive car boot sale two hours after it has started – everything will have gone. I normally arrive just as they are starting – if the papers say they start at Six O'clock you should aim for that time. Many sellers will get there even earlier, wanting to set up as early as possible. A lot

of bargains are snagged in the first half hour of a bootie, and if you're still in bed then you're going to miss them.

The time of the year will affect what the car boot sales will be like. Firstly, summer is definately the best time to go; especially Bank Holiday weekends. As I mentioned before a lot of schools have car boot sales and many of the stall holders are selling off their kids 'old games consoles because they only play on their PS2 now'. I always go to the school ones – without a doubt they are they have the most retro items. Private schools where the parents have more money and the children tend to look after their toys more always yield the best finds.

The other good time of the year is in September / October. This is when a lot of teenagers go to University and their parents can clear out all the 'rubbish' from their rooms. I am sure many first year Degree students have been horrified upon return to find their Mum has 'got two pounds at a car boot sale for that old computer and games' that they treasured so much.

Get everything ready the night before. Go to the cash machine and draw out your money – banks often screw up or run out of money over the weekend, it is very frustrating frantically driving

me whenever I go hunting. Carrier bags laden with games will cut into your hands and get ripped open spilling their contents.

Finally, and most importantly, don't get too drunk the night before! You will either sleep in missing the car boot sales altogether or even worse drive while you're still drunk. There always police on the lookout for early morning drunk drivers – you could loose your license or injure someone in an accident. Please don't drink & drive. And remember to set your alarm at least half an hour early.

Strategy

So you've planned your route, got your stuff ready and managed to drag your ass out of bed at some ungodly hour. First thing to do – get a coffee! You need to be awake for the drive, and on your toes to find all the bargains. I find a particularly strong Columbian does the trick.

Car boot sales get busy very quickly, and the trick is how to get around in as little time as possible, whilst not missing the good stuff. My personal approach is to hit the newest stalls first, and work back through the older ones, repeating the process every time a new row / area appears and

...Car Boot Sales



around your town / city at six in the morning trying to find a working hole in the wall. Also, take more money than you think you will need – if you reckon you will spend around £100 take £150. There is nothing worse than losing out on a really good collection because you haven't got enough money. When you do get your cash, get some of it changed into smaller notes and coins. Early on, a lot of stalls won't have change and valuable time is wasted trying to find someone who can 'break a twenty'.

Likewise you should fill up your car with petrol the night before, get your clothes ready (I always wear old jeans and walking boots – no point messing up your best clothes) and put some waterproofs in the car just in case; we do live in Britain remember? Get a big bag, preferably a rucksack, ready for carrying your haul. I have an eighty litre Karrimor rucksack that accompanies

dropping the oldest row / area.

You will need to learn to identify likely sellers of retro goodies. Typically, middle aged parents are the most likely to have some consoles / computers, although grand parents and young teenagers may have something to offer too, so there is no hard and fast rule. You should begin to spot the antique sellers reasonably quickly, and skip them. Likewise you will easily spot traders and avoid them too.

Soon enough you will be nipping around between stalls, doing a quick, quick, slow type of movement between potential sellers. The next important thing is to learn to ask people if they have X, Y or Z. Yes, it seems obvious but most people just fly so quickly between stalls they don't bother actually asking the sellers if they have what they are looking for.



The best time to speak up is when a new car arrives. Do not become one of those undesirable car boot types (more on this later) that climb in the back of peoples cars the second they turn up. Take it from someone that has done a car boot sale himself – nothing infuriates them more. The person will be busy enough unpacking without having to watch a pack of hungry wolves ransack the contents of his or her car.

The best approach is to politely ask the new arrival if they have any games or consoles. If they say yes, ask if they wouldn't mind putting them aside for you and you'll come back later when they're not so busy. Be polite, courteous and friendly – they will appreciate it. I have some business cards printed with the Console Passion website logo and my contact details. This is useful as I can give it to the person and assure them I am a serious buyer and I will come back. My mobile number is on there so they can give me a quick call if they like once they have got everything sorted out.

Sooner or later you are going to run into co-ordinated groups of undesirable buyers and most likely have some kind of argument with them. Every car boot sale has them in attendance and it is unfortunate that their current interests tend to be retro games – namely anything with Sega or Nintendo written on it. They will take the 'buy all' approach – favoring F1-FA95 on the Megadrive just as much as Secret of Mana on the Super NES. The mentality behind this is that if you buy everything, at least one or two items will bring you a healthy profit, making up for all the other tat you have just bought.

The undesirables where I go consists of several 'searchers' and one 'expert'. The 'searchers' are a rather large woman accompanied by a child with a funny eye, a grubby looking kid with a shaved head and a rats tail, two really mean looking brothers (I think these are enforcers) and the 'expert' who is an older guy with a grey ponytail. If they are not sure about an item, they contact the 'expert' by walkie-talkie and ask him questions on its value. If you get chance try and listen in to the 'expert' with his analysis, it is more often or not factually incorrect and utter nonsense!

My advice is that if you get into an argument with these people then just walk away. Firstly you can waste valuable searching time in an argument, and more often or not there are a lot more of them than you. Normally the argument starts with you buying something, and them telling you that they were going to buy that. Or this is their patch. Or (my personal favorite) you're jumping on their bandwagon. Whatever

the reason, just leave it – it isn't worth the hassle.

You also have to remember that aside from the coordinated teams, you are not the only person looking for games. But this can be a good thing too. I quite often swap part of my haul with other collectors – they have something I want and vice versa. It is also a good idea to befriend other hunters too – not just games hunters but toy hunters, record hunters etc. Let them know what you are on the lookout for and occasionally they will spot something you have missed and let you know about it. They may also know other collectors who you can 'trade' with.

You will have worked out by now that speed is the key to success at a car boot sale. So the situation arrives where you have found a nice Megadrive with a big box of games. So what do you do now? Do you take it all the way back to your car and then come all the way back. Uh-Uh! Pay the nice person and ask them to keep it in their car, saying you'll collect it later. This saves loads of trips backwards and forwards to your car. I would suggest that if you have a poor memory a notepad will help here – you can write down the colour, type and registration of the car and its rough location. I have actually bought something in the past, asked the person to save it and then forgotten where it was (Doh!).

Always keep your eye out for 'other' potential bargains – there aren't just games at car boot sales you know. The other day I picked up a DC-07 Dyson for £5 in full working order. I also got a full set of brand new professional Chef's knives for £10 a few weeks ago. Even if you spot a bargain you don't need you can always sell it on, or give it away as a gift to a relative!

Funnily enough, I find car boot sales are a really good way to meet people. Not just other collectors either. More often or not there is a stall with a couple of nice female students selling off their possessions to pay for tuition fees (or beer more likely). Your friendly chat will be a welcome change from all the old biddy antique collectors asking them if they have any Royal Doulton. It should be pointed out that gushing about how you have just bought a mint boxed copy of Panzer Dragoon Saga would not be the best approach here.

Haggling is acceptable to a degree, but if you are buying £200+ worth of items for a five quid, don't be trying to knock off another pound – that's just plain greedy. Also, you don't have to buy everything either – leave some stuff for other collectors. If you see an unboxed Megadrive with ten games, nine of which you don't want, ask if the person would just sell you



Car Boot Diary: 19th June

06:10 AM Wake up. Coffee! Set off around 6:30AM

06:50 AM Michaels Car Boot

- Nintendo 64, extra controls, memory card & boxed games
- Loose SNES console & controller
- Loose Megadrive 2 console & Japanese game

07:45 AM Blackpool Car Boot

- Boxed Sega Megadrive, controllers & games.
- Blue N64 controller
- Boxed N64 controllers and rumble packs
- Ten PSOne games

08:45 AM Hambleton Car Boot

- Loose Saturn console & game
- Amstrad Disk Games

09:15 AM Lambs Hill Car Boot

- Loose Dreamcast controller and games
- N64 Mission Impossible

Definitely not the best of hauls, but not the worst either. The total cost? Well, from £100 I still had plenty of change to buy my Dad a bottle of Glenmorangie for Fathers Day, and take my family out for a pub lunch!



the single game. Most people think that the consoles are worth the most and will only ask for a pound or so.

So there you go; my guide to successful car boot sale hunting. Follow the instructions well and you should get at least one or two 'scores' a weekend, and some smaller successes too. The only remaining thing I can say is don't be disheartened when you miss out on a really nice collection.

Just keep at it and sooner or later you will find something!

REMAKEES

Love them or loathe them, remakes of classic games are as much a part of the retro scene as the hardware collectors and knowing where you were when you saw Dave Perry get his arse well and truly kicked on Games Master.

Some purists will never accept a remake of their old favourites. These people are often found loitering at car boot sales with an unnerving glint in their eyes, mumbling to themselves - "It's just not the same if you don't play it on the original hardware".

At the other end of the spectrum, we have the overenthusiastic remaker who will remake any old tosh. You know the type. At the age of ten, they bought Peter Beardsley's International Football because the box looked nice; they proceeded to play it to death because they wouldn't have enough pocket money to buy another game for another six weeks; and now they look back at their youth with an industrial-strength pair of rose-tinted specs and think this 'fantastic' game deserves to be updated in glorious SVGA-o-vision.

We all personally sit somewhere on the line between these two polar opposites. We have all had those rose-tinted nostalgic episodes, reminiscing about some game that had a great affect on our formative years and wondering how good it could be with today's improved technology. At the end of the day, as a retro gamer, it all comes down to the balance between your love for the original and your 'crap threshold' – the tolerance of how crap a game can be before you give up on it as a total affront to the memory of your beloved original.

There are so many things that can violate the feel of a classic game in the process of being remade, to the extent that the gameplay is lost forever; it's a careful balancing act that needs to be constantly maintained. For example, a remake of a game that was once graphically superb will be a slight to its memory if remade using some poor, amateurish graphics. The same applies to games renowned for being hugely payable in their day; any remake daring to 'tweak' the physics or just 'having the wrong feel' can spell disaster when released to the public.

I, myself, have a particularly low 'crap threshold' for platform remakes. Back in the days of the Spectrum, the pixel perfect platformer was a mainstay of the industry's output each month. To progress anywhere you had to understand the game; how the sprites would interact with the environment; how many pixels you would move with each frame of movement; and recogni-

nising the one frame of animation that meant if you went one pixel further you would be falling off that platform. To play that game you had to have a relationship with each and every pixel on that screen and respond accordingly, but today, with super-high resolutions, smooth animations and high frame-rates, that relationship is lost. I loved my pixel perfect jumps so it takes a really good remake to get my seal of approval.

Retro Remakes

So, are there any games you've ever wanted to see updated? If you can think of great game, there's a very good chance that there is at least one remake waiting for you in the list at www.retromakes.com. RetroRemakes is the largest site on the internet for remakes of classic games, and hosts a large community of like-minded retro-gamers on its forums. So whether you're after an old game, looking for help with game development or just wanting to chat with fellow gamers, this is the place to be.

The news page will keep you up-to-date on any

So, are there any games you've ever wanted to see updated?

new developments in the remakes scene and alerts you to any new additions to the vast database of remakes already out there.

You might be surprised to know that not all of the remakes are for PCs. Everything from Linux, BEOS and Mac variants, to PSP, GBA and GP32 are covered. We even had our first remake made for the CPC submitted recently. If, in some minuscule probability, you ever wished you could have played HERO on the Amstrad, you now know where to come.

The Retro Competition 2005

RetroRemakes has been working in conjunction with the Retro Ball and Blitz Games to bring to you the Remakes Competition, a one month coding marathon that will net the winner an Xbox 360. Full details of the competition are at www.retromakes.com/comp2005, and you can see the prizes awarded on 3rd December at the Retro Ball. All of the games are available for download at Retro Remakes, so get over there and contribute your comments to the forum discussions.

And no, we don't have Peter Beardsley's International Football. Sorry.

James "Jimster" Nation

Goody

Coptron Games

The internet; it's great, isn't it? It wasn't until I found WoS and saw numerous weird and wonderful titles that I realised there was a great big 8 bit following in the sandier parts of Europe. This game was originally released by Spanish developer Operasoft in 1987 and was released on the PC (in 4 colour CGA glory), MSX and ZX Spectrum. It was left to the Spaniards again, in the guise of Coptron Games, to develop this rather nice remake.



This is very much the typical arcade adventure that was popular on the 8bits after the advent of Dizzy. The basic premise behind the story is that you are a thief, out to rob a Spanish bank. To do this you have to collect the right assortment of tools to do the job. There are various obstacles to hinder your path, including a mugger who will steal your cash and a lady of the night, who blows kisses at you temporarily stopping you in your tracks. All of these can be dealt with by a deft throw of a house brick, although the moral implications of murdering affectionate women with bricks aren't really covered in much detail. I suppose if you're going down for bank robbery, you may as well add a few charges of manslaughter to the deal.

Even if you haven't played (or even heard of) the original, this game is still an enjoyable romp. The graphics have been updated but still in keeping with the original style, so fans of



the original should appreciate the work that's obviously gone into this remake.

<http://coptrongames.remakeszone.com/>

Exolon OH

Graham Goring

In Xmas 1987 there was one thing I wished for more than anything else, a copy of Exolon under the tree. I spent hours looking at the great reviews, drooling over the screenshots in the magazines, rubbing my knees in anticipation of the big day. Finally the big day arrived and I got to rummage in Santa's sack, and behold(!), a pristine copy of Raphael Cecco's finest. It was a magical moment, as I peeled back the wrapping paper; stars shooting around the heavens and Jimmy Cricket singing a song of joyous goodwill. Okay, enough of this staid and, unfortunately, typical retro style of nostalgic review...



Anyway, it's all a lie. My parents bought me Basil the Great Mouse Detective instead which explains why I'm an emotional cripple in my adult years. Thankfully, I was able to sample the delights of Exolon many years later thanks to the discovery of emulation, and now we're about to be treated to one of the best remakes to be produced in recent years.

Graham Goring has been hard at work updating Exolon with the Retrospec team, and it's looking slicker than a cormorant after the



Exxon Valdez spill. Just take a look at these tasty screenshots and you can see for yourself the level of eye candy that's spewing forth from this remake. Everything looks absolutely gorgeous and the gameplay is just as good as it always was.

The release date is imminent, but has been delayed slightly while Graham puts in a fantabulous end sequence for those of you that can actually complete the game. Let's face it, it wasn't the easiest of games and very few people will ever get to see the end; so come on, Graham, get this beauty released!

With a bit of arm-bending, Graham Goring graciously submitted to an interview by Rewind. Check out issue one of the magazine for the full story – the remake, the development engine, and narks.

<http://retrospec.sgn.net/>



REWIND MAGAZINE

It's like the old bus analogy - you wait ages for a bus to come along (after the previous one breaks down leaving its subscribers on the pavement) and then three more come along at once...

Far from me to put Retro Gamer down, as it was very good in its day (well in 2003), there were a few people that were rather less enamoured with it as time wore on. With a cheerful glint in their eye, a new site was set up to cover the retro scene the way that they wanted it covered; varied and informative, with tongue firmly in cheek.

And thus, Rewind was born. The first issue was unleashed upon the internet public in October and has been attracting a steady number of retro fans ever since. It's a slightly different beast to

the usual retro-specific publications as it covers retro-styled indie games and game development alongside the usual retro articles. In the true spirit of hobbyists writing for their like minded peers, each issue is completely free and available to anyone with an internet browser. I've been informed it works fine in Lynx too. How's that for retro?!

The first issue features a whole host of retro-gaming articles including tutorials on drawing cartoon sprites, movement and language tools. All this together with features on Space Invaders, the TI99/4a and reviews of the latest remakes... There's even a pdf for you to print off and keep if you feel the need for something a bit more tangible. Check it out, now!

<http://www.rewindmag.co.uk>



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Next Issue...



Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll, need we say more!

We have interviews lined up with Rob Hubbard and David Whittaker

The Oliver Brothers story

The History of Sensible Software

The start of a Arcade Cabinet building series!

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